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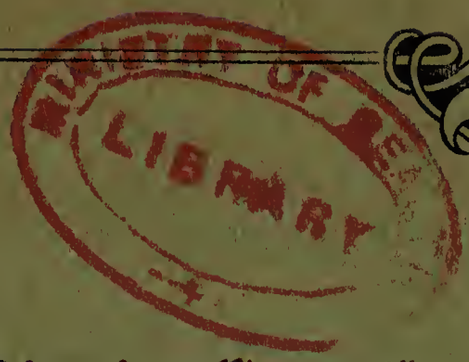

Tow Law Urban District Council

Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for 1938.

TOW LAW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

1938.

Officials.

Part-time Medical Officer of Health :—

District Medical Officer: Public Vaccinator, M.O. to Police and Post Office.

Dr. A. Charlton, M.B., B.S., M.R., San. I.
Grove Lodge, Tow Law.

Part-time Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor :

Mr. T. R. Brown, M.R., San. I., M. Inst., M. & Cy. E.
36 Bridge Street, Tow Law.

Other services provided by the Durham County Council.

Section A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area. 477 acres.

Population.

3280. Registrar General's estimate mid-year 1938.

Number of Inhabited Houses.

End of 1938—928.

Rateable Value. £8007.

Product of 1d. Rate. £29 12s. 7d.

During the year there has been some improvement in the industrial conditions owing to the re-opening of the West Thornley Colliery by the Wingate Coal Company and an improvement in the coal trade consequent upon re-armament.

On the other hand there is still a tendency to migration particularly amongst the younger members of the community to more prosperous areas assisted to a certain extent by land settlement schemes.

There has been a certain amount of activity in the direction of exploring ways and means of attracting new industry without

however any tangible result. It seems to me that little will be accomplished until a prepared site can be obtained in order to compete with the facilities afforded by the various trading estates.

Lack of amenities and poor housing conditions have been said to be retarding factors, amongst others, in the attraction of industry. No doubt the depression of the past few years and the apparent lack of prospects in the district are very great contributory factors. A degree of improvement in amenities is being made by the development of a Social Service Centre and there has been some improvement in the housing conditions but much remains to be done in regard to the provision of bathrooms, water carriage and hot water systems in the older houses. A great need still remains for an industry of a light or semi-heavy nature which if established would bring in its train a general amelioration of the conditions in the area.

In addition to coal-mining, labour is absorbed by a tar-macadam works, by a steel foundry and, to a small extent, by County Council work in addition to agricultural interests and the usual occupations of a small town.

The district is a healthy one by reason of its open situation on the moors at an altitude of 1000 feet and is within easy access of Newcastle-on-Tyne, Durham and Darlington as well as being placed on one of the main arterial roads connecting England with Scotland.

Vital Statistics.

			Total	M	F
Live Births	Legitimate	...	49	22	27
	Illegitimate	...	2	1	1
Still Births	Legitimate	...	4	3	1
	Illegitimate	...	nil	nil	nil

Birth-rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population 16·76

Still Birth Rate per 1000 total (live and still) births ... 72·72

Deaths—Total 40. 22 male. 18 female.

Death-rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population 12·19

Death-rate after adjustment by Areal Comparability Factor 12·92

Death from puerperal causes—nil.

Death rate of infants under one year of age.

All infants per 1000 live births ... 58·82

Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births 61·22.

Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births—nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) 5.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) 1.

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) nil.

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) nil.

CAUSES OF DEATH	M	F
All Causes	22	18
Measles	1	—
Respiratory Tuberculosis	3	—
Cancer	2	3
Diabetes	—	2
Cerebral hæmorrhage, &c.	—	2
Heart disease	3	5
Other circulatory disorders ...	1	4
Bronchitis	2	—
Pneumonia (all forms)	1	—
Acute and chronic Nephritis ...	—	1
Congential debility, premature birth &c.	2	1
Senility	1	—
Violence	1	—
Other defined diseases	3	—
Ill-defined diseases	2	—

Section B

General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

1 (*a*) Public Health Officers.

See commencement of report.

(*b*) Laboratory Facilities. No change.

(*c*) Ambulance Facilities. No change.

Ambulance maintained by private subscription. Adequate service.

(*d*) Nursing in the Home.

County Midwife—Miss Redhead, Hill Terrace, Tow Law.
District Nurse—Tow Law & District Nursing Association. Mrs. Corbett, High Street, Tow Law.

(*e*) Treatment Centres and Clinics. No change

(*f*) Hospitals. No change.

Section C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

1 (*a*) Water.

Supplied by the Durham County Water Board. There has been no important extension with the exception of a supply to the Housing site. During the year the Water Company has cleaned the mains.

No action has been necessary in respect of any contamination.

The supply has been satisfactory in quality and quantity.

(*b*) Drainage and Sewerage.

There has been no extension apart from a sewer extension from the Housing site.

Almost the whole of the sewage is treated by Contact beds and slag filters, the remainder in the isolated districts by land irrigation.

The trunk sewers are clean and flooding is a rarity.

The fluid refuse does not contain any special pollution from any manufacturing process.

There has been a considerable increase in the amount of Water Carriage as a result of Housing activity.

The question of a general conversion to the Water Carriage system has been gone into thoroughly with the co-operation of a firm of Sanitary Engineers who suggested renewal of certain of the older sewers in addition to alteration of and addition to the sedimentation tanks at the sewage works.

Owing to the very considerable expense and the lack of financial assistance the scheme has been left in abeyance.

2 There are no Rivers or Streams in the Urban Area

3 (*a*) Closet Accommodation.

Ash-pit privies converted into ash-closets ...	nil.
Ash-pit privies converted into water-closets...	12.
Total number of water-closets in district ...	174.
Total number of ash-closets in district ...	543.

(*b*) Public Cleansing. No change.

Enclosed tips for the reception of dry refuse are situated on Cornsay Fell and in the Whinney Fields.

(*c*) Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

DWELLING HOUSES, &c.

Informal Written Notices	8
Nuisances abated after Notices	8

DEPOSITS OF REFUSE & MANURE.

Informal Written Notices	11
Nuisances abated after Notices	11

HOUSE DRAINAGE. Defective Traps.

Informal Written Notices	2
Nuisances abated after Notices	2

NO DISCONNECTION FROM SEWERS.

Informal Written Notices	2
Nuisances abated after Notices	2

OTHER FAULTS.

Informal Written Notices	2
Nuisances abated after Notices	2

(*d*) Shops and Offices. No action.

(*e*) Camping Sites.

1. No sites in area were used for camping purposes during 1938.
2. No licences for camping sites were issued by the Local Authority during 1938.

(*f*) Smoke Abatement. No action taken.

(*g*) Swimming Baths and Pools.

There are no swimming baths or pools in the district.

(*h*) Eradication of Bed Bugs.

No action in this respect was deemed to be necessary.

4 Schools.

The water supply is satisfactory. As far as the sanitary conditions are concerned you will remember that in the 1937 report your attention was drawn to the condition of the closet accommodation of the Church of England School.

As a result of action taken 10 privie-closets have been converted into 8 water-closets.

No special action has been necessary in relation to infectious disease amongst the scholars.

Section D. Housing.

During the year 36 new houses were erected by the North-Eastern Housing Association and have been occupied. There have been no houses erected to abate Overcrowding by reason of instructions received to complete the slum clearance programme first.

1. Inspection of dwelling houses during the year :—
   (1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) 296
   (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 296
   (2) (a) Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 119
   (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 119
   (3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 77
   (4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 6

2. Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :—

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers 65

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

(a).—Proceedings under sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.....nil

(b).—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.....nil

(c).—Proceedings under sections 11 & 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :—

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... ... Nil

(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished or rendered unfit in pursuance of Demolition Orders 86

(d).—Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936..... Nil

4. Housing Act, 1936, Part IV—Overcrowding.

As mentioned in the second paragraph of Circular 1728 from the Ministry of Health it has not been found possible to furnish a normal return for the year 1938.

No statutory action has been taken with regard to the re-housing of cases of Over-crowding for the reason mentioned at the commencement of this section.

As a result of action taken under the slum Clearance Acts in relation to Inkerman 12 families comprising 79 persons have been dealt with.

In addition 15 cases of overcrowding involving 88 persons have been abated as a result of other causes, *e.g.*, removals, changed family circumstances, etc.

Section E. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(*a*) Milk Supply.

One dairy cow was destroyed during the year.

No action was found necessary in relation to contamination of milk.

The cowsheds in the district although kept clean are of a poor type and in many instances the structure leaves much to be desired.

(*b*) Meat and other Foods.

The slaughter-houses, &c., have been regularly inspected.

(*c*) Adulteration. No action taken.

(*d*) Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food. Nil.

(*e*) Nutrition. No action.

Section F. Prevalence of. and control over, Infectious aud other diseases,

Notifiable diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during 1938—

Disease	Total cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	5	5	nil
Diphtheria	2	1	nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	nil	nil
Pneumonia	9	nil	2
Erysipelas	7	nil	nil

As will be observed from the above figures there has been no excessive prevalence of Infectious disease during the year.

The majority of the cases of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria have been treated in the Helmington Row Hospital for Infectious Disease with entirely satisfactory results.

Very little progress has been made in your scheme for the artificial immunisation of children against Diphtheria, in all two children, both of school age were treated by the one-shot method, using Alum-precipitated toxoid.

As I have mentioned on previous occasions there appears to be a definite prejudice against any form of treatment savouring of Vaccination. It is a pity that the public do not realise that a period of freedom from Diphtheria is best suited for immunisation and that the difficulties are considerably enhanced if the treatment is not obtained until the disease is prevalent.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) 1938

Analysis of the total notified cases according to age.

Age	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Puerperal Pyrexia	Erysipelas	Pneumonia
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—	—
1—2 years	—	—	—	—	—
2—3 ,,	—	—	—	—	—
3—4 ,,	1	—	—	—	—
4—5 ,,	—	—	—	—	—
5—10 ,,	1	1	—	—	—
10—15 ,,	2	—	—	—	1
15—20 ,,	1	—	1	—	5
20—35 ,,	—	—	—	2	2
35—45 ,,	—	—	—	2	—
45—65 ,,	—	1	—	1	—
65 years and over	—	—	—	2	1

Prevention of Blindness.

No action under the Public Health Acts for prevention or treatment has been necessary.

Tuberculosis.

No action was taken under Section 172 of the Public Health Acts 1936, nor under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925.

During the year seven cases of Tuberculosis were notified—five pulmonary and two non-pulmonary.

There were three deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis giving a Tuberculosis death-rate of ·91 per 1000 of the population.

The administrative control of this disease is under the County Council and sanitorium treatment is available for men at Wolsingham, for women at Seaham Harbour and children at Earl's House, Durham.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0								
1								
5								
15	1	1			2			
25								
35	1		1					
45		1						
55	1				1			
65 and upwards			1					
Total ...	3	2	2		3			

At the close of the year the Tuberculosis Register was as follows :—

	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary
Male	10	10
Female	11	13
Total ...	21	23

All the deaths were previously notified cases.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

A. CHARLTON, M.B., B.S.